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CZECHOSLOVAK RESISTANCE POTENTIAL AND REGIME COUNTERMEASURES

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Summary: This report described some scattered, dated incidents of small-scale organized resistance in Czechoslovakia. Some details on spontaneous anti-regime demonstrations at the time of the 1953 currency reform and a rather high rate of desertions among Border Guard personnel

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CZECHOSLOVAK RESISTANCE POTENTIAL AND REGIME COUNTERMEASURES

A. SCATTERED INCIDENTS OF A RESISTANCE NATURE

1. Armed or Clandestine

[redacted] no groups or persons were currently carrying on active resistance on an organized or effective scale. [redacted] after the Communist coup in 1948, the State Security Forces (StB - Statni tajna bezpecnost) and other security forces had been successful in breaking up and dispersing any active resistance groups and that surviving members who had not been arrested or otherwise disposed of were probably forced to operate in small groups of 10 or less. Particularly in the last four years [redacted] extremely little active resistance except in isolated instances.

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a. Alleged Discovery of Espionage Group in KAPLICE

[redacted] in the summer of 1955, a group of about 12 unidentified people was arrested in KAPLICE (VP-6399) (N48-44, E14-29) by the StB for espionage work for the West. This group, headed by a doctor (nu), allegedly possessed a wireless telegraph apparatus by which they received their instructions and in return transmitted back troop and factory information. Two members of this group were allegedly hanged and the rest received unknown prison sentences.

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b. Anti-Communist Guerilla Group in 1951

(1) Action Against Group

[redacted] joint action of Border Guard and StB personnel against what was called a terrorist band, about 15 in number, in the vicinity of BABICE (WR-4260) (N49-07, E15-46). Involved in this action were about 200 Border Guard and 100 StB men using five Tatra trucks and 10 unidentified automobiles. [redacted] utilizing a Piper-Cub-type plane for observation, had succeeded in cornering the band in a corn field. The plane spotted one of the members of the band who was wearing a white shirt. The man became frightened and opened fire on the plane with a SMG, at which point a running gun battle ensued. The leader of the band, (fnu) MALY, and one other member were killed; two others were wounded. The Border Guard and StB forces allegedly did not sustain any casualties. The entire action took only about five hours since the Border Guard and StB had been informed from unidentified sources as to the whereabouts of the band.

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(2) Trial of Group

[redacted] the trial of these men in JIHLAVA (WQ-4272) (N49-24, E15-35). [redacted] an 18 year old member (nu) of this band was held responsible for assassinating two minor Communist Party functionaries (nu) in the city of BABICE. Seven of the men were sentenced to be hanged, including the 18-year-old youth, and the remainder received unknown prison sentences.

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A store of arms belonging to this group was found in the cellar of a [redacted] home in BABICE and was exhibited at the trial. Among this cache of arms were approximately 10 SMG's, four rifles, five pistols and eight grenades plus an unknown amount of ammunition. One member (nu) of this band worked in an unidentified arms factory in BRNO from which he stole some of the arms found in their possession. The arms were of both German WW II and Czech types.

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Also a list was allegedly found in their possession which contained names of Communists in the area who were marked for assassination. In addition to this, the band was also held responsible for setting fire to the homes of three Communist Party functionaries in BABICE.

it was brought out in the investigation and trial of these men that MALY was allegedly an agent of the West and was receiving his operational funds from an unknown organization a large number of men who also belonged to this same band were not apprehended.

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two groups in this band, one headed by (fnu) CHROMNIK, numbering about 150 men and the other headed by (fnu) BURLAK and numbering about 200 men. They were aided by anti-Communist elements of the population who brought them arms and food in the same year. What they did not receive, they took by force. Most of the rebels had been killed or apprehended in the action with heavy casualties on both sides

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a film titled Action-B (Akcja-B) which showed the National Security Force in action against the rebel group.

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2. Protest Against Devaluation of the Czech Crown in 1953

The most widespread example of passive resistance took place in 1953 at the time of the devaluation of the Czech Crown to 20 percent of its former value. This act of the Czechoslovak Government aroused nationwide discontent among the people resulting in wholesale absenteeism of workers from factories for two days and gathering of groups on street corners in the cities.

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dispersal actions in the following cities: PILSEN, OSTRAVA, VIMPERK (VQ-1034) (N49-02, E13-47), TRINEC (CA-3108) (N49-41, E18-39) and HORNÍ PLANA (CA-1711) (N48-46, E14-02).

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In HORNÍ PLANA a former Border Guard officer named (fnu) DOKOUPIL, who was a factory worker there at that time, was arrested for anti-regime incitation of the workers of the factory where he was employed. He also shouted "Gestapo" several times at the incoming Border Guard troops.

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Personnel actually guarding the border were not called in to take part in these dispersal actions, thus conserving strength at the border.

3. Distribution of Balloon-Dropped Pamphlets

The only pamphlets were the ones dropped by balloons coming from the West. A great many of these balloons were shot down by Border Guard personnel

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there were a great many small groups in Czechoslovakia, of not more than five people each, who distributed these pamphlets at night among the populace. In the spring of 1955, a man (nu) was arrested by Border Guard intelligence

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personnel on the train and was taken away by the authorities at the railroad station in KAJOV (N48-49, E14-15). He received a three-year jail sentence for this activity.³

4. High Rate of Border Guard Desertions

The Border Guard, [] had the greatest number of military desertions of the Czechoslovak armed forces. This was mainly because of the proximity of its personnel to the border and consequent means of escape. Since 1951, approximately 25 soldiers had deserted [] Border Guard brigade [] Many Border Guard soldiers also disliked their duty because the local populace was unfriendly and referred to them as the "Green SS". [] if a border guard walked into a cafe, the civilian people in the cafe would immediately become cautious and would limit their conversation.

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B. REGIME PROPAGANDA AND OTHER COUNTERMEASURES

1. Mail Censorship

It was commonly believed in Czechoslovakia that all incoming mail from foreign countries and all mail of individual persons under suspicion for anti-regime activities was censored. []

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2. Undermining of Religion

[] religious attendance in Czechoslovakia had declined very much since the Communists took over the government in 1948. []

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The younger generation had undergone constant indoctrination in anti-religious principles in schools, in their youth groups and in almost every phase of their life.

The only chance for advancement in Czechoslovak society was through the Communist party. [] even if a student were outstanding in the scientific field, he would not be allowed to continue his studies if he were anti-Communist or religious.

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The Communist newspapers constantly derided religious activity in Czechoslovakia.

The traditional Roman Catholic church in Czechoslovakia no longer existed. The clergymen no longer received their instructions from ROME but from a Communist group, the State Office for Church Affairs (Statni urad pro veci cirkevni - SUVOC). The latter had made the church in Czechoslovakia a tool of the government.

3. Anti-Minority Prejudices

[] the Jewish population in Czechoslovakia was very small. on the whole the Czechoslovak people were strongly anti-

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Semitic. It was commonly believed by them that the Jews were favored by the government and were promoted more readily, especially in government retail outlets. The only government anti-Semitic activity [] was the purge of high officials (of Jewish extraction) in 1953, including: [] TAUSIGOVA, SIMON, SLANSKY and LANDA.

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There was also a strong anti-German feeling in the country, stemming from the German occupation of Czechoslovakia during the war and the remembrance of atrocities committed by the Germans. []

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4. Effects of the Present Regime on the Youth of Czechoslovakia

[] the propaganda and activities of the government was effective on the youth of Czechoslovakia. [] all the organized activity in which young people could participate was sponsored by the Communist Party. In the schools the students were subjected to daily political indoctrination. The prime example of such youth activity [] was the CSM (Ceskoslovensky svaz mladeze - Czechoslovak Youth Union) in which youth could participate in sports, dances, singing, group activities and political discussions. The latter were always rather one-sided. [] 10-year-old school children coming home and speaking of the "hated dragon of capitalism".

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In 1954 a group of 13-year-old boys reported an agent in the vicinity of the 10th Border Guard Brig. causing his apprehension. The boys received diplomas for their alertness. [] the majority of boys in this age group were pro-Government and would have reacted the same way in the aforementioned incident. []

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Young couples intending to marry could receive a 1300 crown loan from the Government which they could pay back in 200 or 300 crown monthly installments. To receive this loan, however, they had to be politically "clean".

C. GENERAL POPULAR EVALUATION OF REGIME

[] the majority of the Czechoslovak people disapproved of the present regime and would not reelect the present government if allowed to vote in a truly free election. While 98 percent of the eligible Czechoslovak voters went to the polls and cast their ballots, they have an opportunity to vote for the Communist candidate only. If they were to vote for someone other than the Communist candidate, they would immediately be detected and kept under observation. This type of election was very strongly resented by the Czechoslovak people.

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[] the Communist government occasionally gave the people rights such as those enjoyed in democratic countries; this was for propaganda purposes. [] in 1956 defendants in court cases were given the right of counsel for the first time since the Communist coup d'etat in 1948.

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[] all organized activity in Czechoslovakia was Communist-sponsored. [] the following organizations: The Communist Youth Union (Ceskoslovensky svaz mladeze), the Union of Czechoslovak-Soviet Friendship (Svaz Ceskoslovensko-Sovetskeho pratelstvi) and the Committee of Women (Vybor zen).

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[] the economic situation was much better in Czechoslovakia than in other Satellite countries. []

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[] a pair of shoes in Poland cost 600 zloti, whereas the average worker received about 450 zloti per month. In Czechoslovakia, however, a pair of shoes cost 100 Crowns while the average wage was approximately 1,000 Crowns.

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In the event of war with the West, [redacted]
50 percent of the people would give only nominal support to the Government cause
and that another 20 percent would actively resist the Communist cause.

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1. [redacted] Comment: These were probably the alleged followers of Stefan
BANDERA, a purported resistance leader in the Carpatho-
Ukraine area. They were collectively called in Russian
Banderovtsi.

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2. [redacted] Comment: [redacted] the action against this group took place
in 1947, despite the fact that the Communist coup occurred later
in March 1948.

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